

UMSEBENZI ONLINE

Umsebenzi Online on Women

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Umsebenzi Online is the SACP's authentic voice. It often carries an article by the elected SACP General Secretary, currently **Dr Blade Nzimande**.

To complete the picture of the women's movement that the CU has tried to provide in our ten-part "[No Woman, No Revolution](#)" set, the last main document (attached, and linked below) consists of four articles published in Umsebenzi Online since the beginning of 2006.

2006 was the year when the CU did its first "No Woman, No

Revolution” series, from February to May of that year, meeting at the Women’s Jail, Constitution Hill. August 2006 was when we saw the launch of the “Progressive Woman’s Movement”, something different and opposite in character from what the Communist University had imagined was needed.

Here are some speculative theses on the question of women in South Africa:

- Women, as such, have no interests that are antagonistic to those of men, but women have a common and particular felt experience among themselves, as women, of the oppression that capitalism has brought to their lives.
- Therefore there is a basis for working women to organise as a mass, by which is meant a small or large number of people who feel a common disadvantage in society, and who in consequence organise themselves together for their mutual collective good and combined self-defence.
- Women’s mass organisations have the same requirement as trade unions and political-vanguard organisations, to be both democratic and centralist. Therefore women’s organisations should have individual membership and branches, hold periodic national congresses, have corporate personality, and have a constitution to ensure democracy.
- The SACP, as a vanguard political organisation of the working class, is designed to relate to such mass organisations, just as it relates to trade union organisations, and others.
- As a matter of historical fact, the ANC, through the

ANCWL, has on at least four successive occasions since its founding in 1948, acted to ensure that the above kind of democratic, mass, individual-membership general-purpose women's movement could **not** flourish. The ANCWL, under pressure from the ANC, blighted FEDSAW, then the UDF women's structures, then the Women's National Coalition, and it now blights the Progressive Women's Movement.

- The ANC adopted “non-sexism” in the 1980s, and the current South African Constitution is non-sexist, but in practice these provisions mean little as compared to the material non-existence of a mass women's movement that has membership and democracy, and which is politically aligned to the working class and to the cause of socialism.
 - Very little of the above is discussed in the general public realm. What discussion there may be is often based on unexamined bourgeois-feminist, eclectic and post-modernist precepts. The situation is, on the face of it, much the same as it was more than a decade ago in mid-2005, when the Communist University began to put together its first “No Woman, No Revolution” series.
 - Yet great gains have been made. One was the election, in December 2007 at Polokwane, of an ANC National Executive Committee of 84 members of which 50% were women. Another was the announcement in 2009 by the SACP GS that the YCLSA has a membership that is more than 50% female.
- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Umsebenzi Online on Women, 2006-2009](#).
 - To download any of the CU courses in PDF files [please click here](#).